

Corporate Plan

2011 - 2012

The Northumberland National Park Authority was independently assessed in November 2010 as performing to a very high standard. Our challenge in the year ahead is to maintain our high standards of delivery in an environment of reducing resources.

June 2011

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Foreword

The Corporate Plan sets out the Authority's work programme for 2011/12 and in doing so details the actions the Authority will be undertaking to help deliver the Northumberland National Park Management Plan 2009-2014. It also reports on the delivery of our work programme in 2010/11. The Authority has maintained its focus on delivery and has performed strongly against the work programme for last year.

The Corporate Plan has been developed against a backdrop of significant budget reductions for both the National Park Authority and in the wider public sector, which have impacted on many of the Authority's close partner agencies.

Northumberland National Park Authority has decided to react to proposed four year reductions in national park grant from Defra by establishing a new baseline budget in 2011/12 which will accommodate this reducing budget, thus avoiding incremental year on year budget cuts.

The planning and implementation of this Corporate Plan will, therefore, coincide with a significant change management programme within the Authority. Every effort has been made to protect front line services and our work programme will continue to make a significant contribution to delivering the wider aims of the National Park and Defra and wider Government priorities.

Nevertheless it will not be possible to deliver all of our previous ambitions and the Corporate Plan sets out the main areas of impact on our Three Year Business Plan 2010-2013.

Tony Gates
Chief Executive (National Park Officer)

Our Values

In Northumberland National Park Authority our corporate values are:

- Respect for each other
- Equality
- Collaborative and supportive working
- Trust and empowerment
- Communicating and Acting
- Strong, clear and inspiring leadership

Our Culture

In order to address these values and to achieve its aims the Authority will adopt a culture which:

- Is open to and embraces change
- Actively supports personal and organisational learning and development;
- Values innovation and achievement over systems;
- Recognises and celebrates individual and team achievements;
- Learns from what we do within a “no blame” culture, with performance management and review contributing positively to our learning;
- Has open and honest communications where information is freely shared, feedback given and actions explained;
- Where non-adherence to our Culture and Values is challenged and inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated.

Executive Summary

Independent Performance Assessment

In November 2010 Northumberland National Park Authority was independently assessed through the National Park Authorities Performance Assessment programme (NPAPA) as delivering to a very high standard with two of its service areas identified as exemplary. The assessment reported notable improvements since the last assessment in 2005. The Authority is considered to be exemplary in:

1. The quality of the vision and the plans to deliver the vision – including impressive partner involvement, working beyond administrative boundaries and having a well integrated corporate planning framework.
2. Achieving wider sustainable development outcomes – including engaging and empowering communities, embedding staff within communities and having a highly valued role in the wider economic needs of the area.

Four areas of our work were considered to be delivering to a very high standard with only one area found to be delivering to an adequate standard; promoting opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities by the public. The Assessment considered that this can be improved by a better focus and clarity of aims including improving partnership working, better use of performance information to drive forward service standards and by focussing on creating new easy to use access routes in key locations across the National Park.

Reacting to Change

The Authority's corporate performance in 2010/11 has been delivered against a backdrop of a 5% in-year budget reduction, and the planning and implementation of a change management programme undertaken to match the organisations future capacity with a 33% reduction in government core grant by April 2014.

In addition, government required us to run a local consultation on planned changes to the governance arrangements for English national park authorities and the Authority took the decision to bring forward our peer performance review by a year to help inform our budget reduction decisions. Whilst the Authority had planned activity in the year to achieve significant savings, the scale of the final budget settlement meant that much of our work plan in this area was overtaken by the need for a much larger budget reduction and change management programme. Consequently, resources within the corporate services and support functions were redirected from the original work plan centred on embedding efficiency savings, invest to save initiatives, and service reviews, to support a much more fundamental review of the Authority's priorities.

Our Performance

Despite this additional work the Authority has continued to deliver strong performance against the original work plan with our frontline services remaining largely intact in the year.

We performed strongly in:

- Piloting a youth volunteer initiative;
- Completing rural skills training projects;
- Delivering biodiversity actions;
- Adding value to Higher Level Stewardship agreements;
- Delivering climate change mitigation measures;
- Securing funds to improve rural broadband, and;
- Enabling local businesses and communities through the Action Area approach.

We made good progress in:

- Making access improvements, and;
- Developing a landscape strategy for the National Park.

We under-performed by:

- Only partially delivering climate change adaptation actions;
- Making minimal progress on a habitat and species monitoring programme, and;
- Failing to make significant progress against our targets to improve the historic environment.

Performance Indicators

Our performance in 2010/11 for our 46 headline indicators showed that against the previous years performance 21 are improving, 11 are static, 12 are declining. (There was no trend information available for 2).

2010/11 Performance Indicators – movement from previous year		
Improving	↑	21
Static	=	11
Declining	↓	12
Trend not available	n/a	2
		46

Measuring performance against the previous year does not tell the whole story as static or even declining performance may still represent good performance relative to longer term trends and external benchmarks. For instance, the indicator for 'National Park Centre satisfaction' shows no change to the previous year and the three year average, but this is actually excellent performance as satisfaction is being maintained at 90% plus. Therefore an assessment of performance has been made using trend and benchmark information where it is available. This shows that 'good' performance outweighs 'poor' performance by nearly 4:1.

Performance Indicators - Assessment		
Good Performance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	26
Acceptable Performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	13
Poor Performance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7
		46

Benchmarking Our Performance

The English National Park Authority family has agreed with Defra (our government sponsoring Department) a set of national performance indicators. The results for 2010/11 show:

National Park Family Indicators	
	Number of Northumberland Indicators in Quartile
Top Quartile	8
Second Quartile	3
Third Quartile	2
Lowest Quartile	7
Total	20

This shows a reasonable relative performance with a ratio of 11:9 in the top/bottom half of the benchmark with the indicators in lowest quartile relating to areas of known weakness. We perform particularly well on the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Development Management performance, and on reducing carbon emissions from our estate. We perform poorly relative to other National Parks on the ease of use of our rights of way network but this fits with our stated position to prioritise resources at the most heavily used routes only. However, we benchmark poorly for making improvements to the historic environment which is a priority area of work for the Authority.

Forward Work Programme

The work programme for 2011/12 shows strong alignment to our revised priorities of: Land Management and Conservation; Rural Development and Localism; Skills and Training, and; Engagement and progressing 'The Sill – Wild Landscape Centre' project. The work programme also addresses areas where our past performance benchmarks poorly. For example our access work is targeted on increasing the number of 'access for all' routes to address the lack of access for the less abled in the Park and we will deliver the 'Heritage at Risk' project to improve our historic environment performance. The work programme shows strong linkage with Defra and Government priorities and we will deliver using our well established 'Action Area' approach to enable businesses and communities to help us deliver our purposes.

Section 1. Overview

1.1 Statutory Purposes and Vision

The role of the National Park Authority is clearly defined in our two statutory purposes which are to:

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and
- Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

In pursuing these purposes, we are also required to:

- Seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

The Authority has a duty to prepare a National Park Management Plan as the framework for the delivery of the National Park statutory purposes and duty and to review the Plan at least every five years. The Management Plan is the single most important document for the National Park, setting out the guiding principles, vision, objectives and outcomes for managing the National Park. The current Management Plan was adopted by the Authority in June 2009, and delivery is actively managed via the Management Plan Partnership.

The Vision for Northumberland National Park
<p><i>'Northumberland National Park will be a truly welcoming and distinctive place, easily accessible to all.</i></p> <p><i>Its inspiring and changing landscapes, characterised by open spaces, tranquillity, diverse habitats and rich cultural heritage, will be widely recognised and valued.</i></p> <p><i>The living, working landscape will contribute positively to the wellbeing of the thriving and vibrant communities in and around the Park.'</i></p>

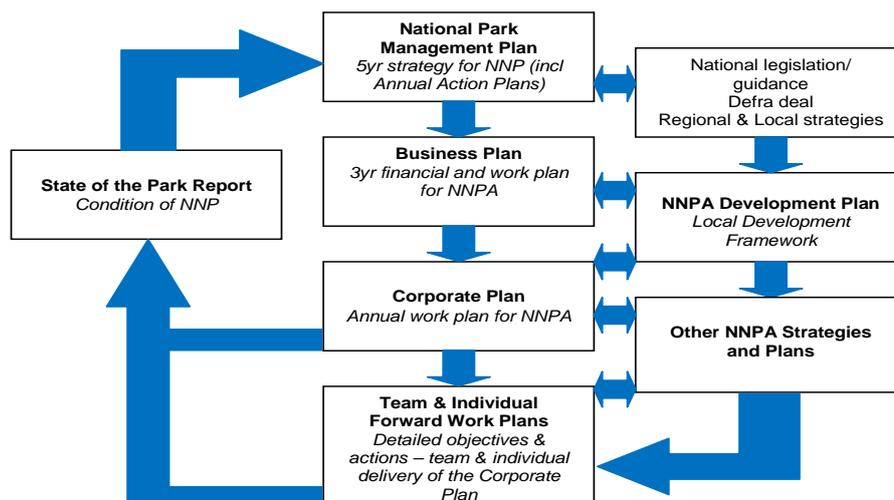
1.2 Translating the Vision into Action

The Authority leads the **Management Plan Partnership** which helps ensure that partner's policies and activities are co-ordinated towards delivering the Vision for the National Park. The Authority translates its contribution towards delivering the Vision and guides its Action Area delivery by setting a medium term set of priorities and objectives within a 3 Year Business Plan and detailed annual actions within this Corporate Plan. This Corporate Plan reports on the first year delivery, and sets out the second year actions against the 3 year Business Plan. The Corporate Plan provides the basis for team and individual forward work plans which illustrate what every member of staff will do to work towards achieving the Vision.

Figure 1 illustrates how the Corporate Plan, team and individual forward work Plans fit within the hierarchy of strategies and plans prepared by the Authority.

The Corporate Plan is an essential tool in communicating past performance and the forward work programme internally to our staff, Members, and volunteers and in demonstrating how our work delivers Defra and wider Government priorities.

Figure 1: Hierarchy of Plans



1.3 Resources

The Authority has been actively planning options against differing budget scenarios since summer 2010. The scale of the final budget settlement will see the Authority’s national park grant reduce by 33% in real terms by the end of the Spending Review period in 2014 from 1 April 2010.

The Authority has a small estate of buildings and sites such as car parks with only limited opportunities to raise income. Our focus has been to establish a new base budget for the Authority together with realising savings from previous renewable energy investments and progressing income generation opportunities such as outsourcing visitor centres, renting office space, and investing in additional visitor car parking to increase future income.

Northumberland National Park Authority consists of 22 Members who are appointed to represent national and local interests, employs 65 staff¹ and has 41 active voluntary rangers. The staff, Members and volunteers are the Authority’s greatest resource, accounting for 60% of our annual income. A review of the Authority’s governance arrangements may see a reduction in the number of members and the budget reductions will see our staff numbers reduce to 52 by the end of this financial year. Further staff reductions are anticipated in the coming years associated with the planned changes in visitor centre provision.

1.4 Approach to Budget Reductions

In order to accommodate reductions in national park grant the Authority has had to make strategic decisions on the scale and approach on which we will operate going forward.

As a result the scope of our activities will be reduced and our primary focus will be on sustaining the core ‘resource’ of the National Park. We will maintain our commitment to the Action Area approach and will build on this to take a more enabling role to deliver more through others. We recognise that many of our partners are also experiencing reduced resources but we expect this to drive an even more collaborative approach co-ordinated through the Management Plan Partnership.

¹ Staff numbers are shown as “Full Time Equivalents”. The 65.2 FTE (79 individuals) will reduce to 52.5 FTE (65 individuals) in the financial year. At the time of publication the breakdown for those leaving our employment is 9 voluntary redundancies, 4 compulsory redundancies, and 1 resignation. A further 4 posts have been lost as fixed term contracts have not been renewed or extended.

We have used the principles of: streamlining management and governance; ensuring a more effective and efficient estate, and; being an exemplar in working with communities, in guiding our decisions on where to reduce or remove service provision. The impact of budget reductions will result in:

- 50% fewer management posts
- A 60% reduction in administrative/corporate support
- Reduced “partnerships/networking” budget
- Reduced Action Area and Sustainable Development Fund budgets
- Reduced farming and ranger posts
- Closure or alternative delivery of two visitor centres
- Removal of Sustainable Tourism post
- Reduced tourism and marketing resources

1.5 Our Priorities

The Authority has a duty to ensure our resources (human, financial and physical assets) are used in an effective manner. Every three years we undertake a reassessment of our discretionary work areas² to identify our priorities and then set them out within our Business Plan. This exercise was last undertaken late in 2009 using the newly adopted National Park Management Plan as a basis. The Authority’s core and statutory services³ were due to be the subject of service reviews to achieve efficiency savings, however the magnitude of the budget reductions has meant that we have had to undertake a more fundamental review of all our services.

In 2009 the Authority’s discretionary areas of work were prioritised as follows:

Higher Priority Areas	Medium Priority Areas	Lower Priority Areas
Farming and Land Management	Visitor Centres	Recreation Sites and Facilities
Rural Development	Website & E-Comms	Cultural Heritage and Traditions
Natural Environment	Climate Change Adaptation	Marketing
Mitigating Climate Change	Rights of Way and Access	
Skills and Training	Archaeology and the Historic Environment	
	Audience Engagement	
	Sustainable Tourism	

Following the detailed budget reduction exercise in 2010/11 we will focus on sustaining the ‘resource’ of the National Park by prioritising:

- Land Management and Conservation
- Rural Development and Localism
- Skills and Training
- Engagement and progressing ‘The Sill – Wild Landscape Centre’ project

There will be an overall reduction in capacity in virtually all of our service areas.

² Work areas which the Authority undertakes in pursuance of its statutory purposes and duty, where the Authority has discretion on the way in which it delivers.

³ Work areas which are required to allow the organisation to function effectively such as: Development Management, Forward Planning, Finance, Human Resources and IT

1.6 Linkage to Defra/Government Priorities

Localism

We remain committed to working with and through communities using our 'Action Area' approach. We will review our governance arrangements to increase local accountability and hold an annual National Park Forum. We will support 3 Parish Councils to develop a Neighbourhood Plan.

Big Society

We will operate our 'Action Area' approach to enable businesses and communities to achieve their ambitions. We will continue to work with volunteers to deliver our purposes and enhance their skills. We will deliver a volunteer based 'Heritage at Risk' project and expand our Youth Volunteer Initiative as a means of supporting engagement of young people and enabling pathways to employment.

Healthy Society

We will train and support volunteers to deliver the 'Walks to Wellbeing' programme and other supported walks and events for the less abled. We will continue to develop and promote public access to the countryside and increase the number of 'access for all' routes to enable wider participation of people of all abilities.

Healthy Environment

We will work in partnership to enhance/deliver multiple benefits to society from the natural environment. We will develop a landscape scale initiative with partners and land managers and seek to connect landscape both within and beyond the National Park boundary.

Uplands Policy

We will work with land owners, Natural England and other partners to ensure sustainable management of the uplands. We will direct funding and support in to rural development activities to ensure sustainable upland businesses and communities.

Climate Change

We will continue to reduce CO₂ emissions from our own estate and provide advice and support to local businesses and communities. We will work with Northumberland Warmzones to improve the energy efficiency of homes in the National Park. We will deliver our climate change adaptation plan including the 'Cheviot Futures' project.

Economic Recovery

We will operate our Action Area and Sustainable Development funds and support the Northumberland Uplands LEADER to provide investment into local business and rural development initiatives. We will build on past success to further enhance investment in rural broadband services.

Section 2. Delivering the Vision – Our Previous Year's Performance

Aim 1. A Welcoming Park

In contributing to an exceptional National Park experience we have:

Improved Access – In 2009 the Authority made a decision to prioritise its limited resources into maintaining the most heavily used routes and targeting investment at specific sites to provide 'access for all' routes to address the lack of routes in the Park that are accessible to the less able. In the last year 'access for all' routes have been completed from key visitor sites at Elsdon, Ingram and Walltown. However, work on the Hadrian's Wall National Trail to create an 'access for all' route at the popular site of Steel Rigg was not delivered due to delays in obtaining scheduled monument consent. Work to develop plans to improve visitor facilities in 4 key settlements was also delayed. This work is now scheduled for 2011/12.

Elsewhere on the rights of way network we have replaced stiles with gates on 3 heavily used routes to improve accessibility and completed our targeted maintenance schedule, improving the ease of use indicator from 68% to 71% in the year with 100% of routes signposted where they leave the road (up from 93%). We have completed a 400m section of flagged path at Scotsman's Knowe, installed a new bridge at Stonefolds, and made path improvements at Padon Hill and Stonehaugh on the Pennine Way National Trail.

Operated award winning National Park Centres – We continued to operate the award winning National Park Centres at Once Brewed, Rothbury, and Ingram providing facilities and support to 110,000 visitors in the year. Visitor numbers were down on the 126,000 for the previous five years mirroring the regional visitor performance picture. However, we maintained visitor satisfaction levels at 90% or above for a fifth consecutive year.

Developed a funding bid for 'The Sill', Wild Landscape Centre – The project aims to replace the aging National Park Centre and Youth Hostel facilities at Once Brewed on Hadrian's Wall with an iconic new multi-purpose centre that will attract 60,000 additional visitors annually, boost the local economy, and provide a top class facility to showcase the National Park landscape and the wider natural and historic environment. Work in the year included research into the economic impact of the centre and how young and under-represented audiences could be engaged to increase visits from these groups to the countryside. A Heritage Lottery Fund bid will be made in 2011/12.

To help achieve a wider and more diverse audience we have:

Delivered engagement activities to help the less able or confident to access the countryside – We delivered the second year of the three year 'Walks to Wellbeing' programme which provides free, short (2-4 mile) walks within the Park to help people with health problems. The programme is designed to be a progression from the Natural England funded 'Walking for Health' initiative freeing up spaces for further participation in their 1-2 mile urban fringe walking programme. In the last year 16 walks were delivered via 26 volunteers trained by us to lead the 260 participants that took part. We also trained and supported our volunteer rangers to deliver 39 walks and events with 295 participants in the year.

Helped organise and run a photographic exhibition in Newcastle to engage with young and urban audiences – The exhibition ran between June and September and

consisted of 87 inspiring photographs of the National Park landscape. We organised a programme of activities including showcasing local crafts and produce, and talks by the photographers, our specialist staff and volunteer rangers. We arranged for the photographers to visit the National Park with the local first schools at Greenhead and Greenhaugh and trialled new technology for self guided walks using visitors web-enabled phones. The gallery report the exhibition to be “the most influential the gallery has displayed resulting in a notable increase in footfall” and 85% of visitors said that the exhibition would make them more likely to visit Northumberland National Park.

Worked with the Mosaic programme to promote visits from Black and Minority Ethnic groups to National Parks – We continued our work with Black and Minority Ethnic Community Champions from the Newcastle area to build confidence within these communities to visit the countryside. We hosted 4 events in the year including a ‘Group Leader Visit’ demonstrating where to go and what to do in the Park to enable them to revisit at a later date with members of their community. We also hosted a group of 50 Asian women at Walltown recreation site for a picnic and visit to Hadrian’s Wall and gained useful feedback on how to manage the site to make it a more attractive destination to the Asian community. Mosaic has produced a leaflet and map showing people how to access the National Park from the Newcastle / Gateshead area including bus routes, bus service numbers, and contact information for further travel information. With reducing resources we will look to deliver this work differently in future, for example by working with our youth volunteer ‘Changemaker’ to engage with young and young Black and Minority Ethnic groups.

We have contributed to a more diverse range of learning opportunities by:

Working with local schools – We have delivered 19 ‘Learning Outside The Classroom’ activities with schools to engage 465 pupils in the National Park. We also worked with Greenhead and Greenhaugh first schools to help them work towards ‘eco school’ status.

Piloting a Youth Volunteer initiative – which aims to build career pathways for young people living in or connected to the National Park, providing them with practical experience prior to making career decisions. The Youth Volunteers are mentored by National Park staff and experienced Voluntary Rangers to gain experience in practical conservation projects, environmental and access surveys, and countryside management skills. For the pilot we have worked with two Year 12 / 13 students undertaking a BTEC work-related qualifications in Countryside Management course at Haydon Bridge High School and we now intend to expand the initiative to include two further schools.

Successfully completing the final year of the ‘Traditional Boundaries Traditional Skills’ training project – which trained 10 people from a broad range of backgrounds in boundary management, rural skills, and micro-business start-up skills each year. The project was undertaken to address a skills shortage and the poor state of boundaries in the National Park and beyond. The project ended in November 2010 and over the five years of the project 51 trainees were recruited with 47 achieving a Dry Stone Walling Association / Lantra initial level qualification and 42 going on to achieve the intermediate level qualification. 26 trainees now work full or part time in boundary maintenance, 8 are using the skills they learnt in rural based roles, 7 are in non-related employment, and 2 are in higher education. Over the duration of the project over 7,000 metres of wall were repaired and over 5,000 metres of hedges, fencing and footpath were created or maintained. The project engaged the public with demonstrations at 32 events, by engaging with 212 volunteers providing 3,052 volunteer days, and supporting 13 school and community projects. The legacy of the project is that 67% of the original recruits are working in rurally based roles, with 26 new businesses created helping to maintain the landscape of the National Park into the future. The project gained a ‘special mention’ as a finalist in the

economic development and regeneration section of the 2010 Local Government Chronicle awards.

Delivering a pilot Upland Farming Traineeship – a rural skills training project to address community concerns around skills shortages and succession planning for upland farms. The project provided the 12 host farms with support and knowledge transfer and provided 8 trainees with practical farm based upland farming skills backed by a National Vocational Qualification level 2 qualification. Of the 8 trainees, 7 completed the course with 6 achieving a full diploma and 1 achieving a certificate. 6 trainees have gained paid employment and 1 voluntary employment in farming based roles at the end of the course. Despite positive feedback from the trainees and farmers keen to take part in successor schemes, changes in the external funding environment means that the project is unable to continue beyond the pilot. We will look for alternative means to delivering rural training going forward.

Indicator Title	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Assm't
Visitor satisfaction with the tourism services and facilities in the National Park	-	78%	78%	78%	<input type="checkbox"/> =
% satisfaction rating for users of 'promoting understanding' services	-	-	92%	92%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
% increased understanding of what is special about National Parks for users of 'promoting understanding' services	-	-	76%	84%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
% of users of 'promoting understanding' services from under-represented groups	-	-	9%	41%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
National Park Centre satisfaction-effectiveness survey score	92.63%	90.12%	90.35%	89.96%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
Website usage - unique users and user satisfaction					
a) Uniques users (,000)	158	178	217	232	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) % rating the website as 'very good' or 'excellent'			82.9%	72.8%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↓
Volunteer Days					
a) Number of volunteer days led by Northumberland National Park Authority	1,512	1,252	1,124	1,129	<input type="checkbox"/> =
b) Number of those days attended by 'under represented' groups	-	-	-	45	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Percentage of footpaths and other rights of way easy to use by the public					
a) % easy to use even though they may not follow the exact definitive line	-	-	68.30	71.20	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) % easy to use that follow the exact definitive line	52.90	66.80	68.30	71.20	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
c) % signposted where they leave the road	94.40	91.90	93.30	100.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑

Good Performance Acceptable Performance Poor Performance
 Improving Trend = Static Trend ↓ Declining Trend

Aim 2. A Distinctive Place

To help maintain the sense of inspiration and tranquillity we have:

Begun work on a Landscape Strategy and Supplementary Planning Documents – to guide recreation and development to ensure it fits with the character and capacity of its location. Our budget reduction exercise meant that a decision was made not to progress some planned Supplementary Planning Documents and to combine the development of the 'Landscape' and 'Design Guide' Supplementary Planning Documents with the development of the Landscape Strategy. Early community engagement activities were completed in the year with the production of draft strategy and consultation exercises planned for summer 2011.

Worked to reassess and improve tranquillity – we made good progress in our work to reassess tranquillity mapping for the National Park. 85% of people surveyed said that tranquillity was 'very important' to their enjoyment of the National Park, with 58% saying that they would not visit these parts of the National Park if they were not tranquil. We led the Northumbria Police Land Managers' Liaison Group and were collectively successful in reducing the illegal vehicle use on the Salter's Road route resulting in a marked improvement in tranquillity and the surface condition.

Used our role as a planning authority to safeguard the special qualities of the National Park – by providing pre-application advice on developments, utilising the Building Design Guide in decisions for 80% of relevant applications, and ensuring conditions to safeguard protected species were included in 100% of relevant applications. Two Grade II Listed Buildings at Crows Nest and Charlton were removed from the 'at risk' register in the year due to previous planning decisions enabling development at the sites.

To safeguard and enhance the natural qualities and diverse habitats we have:

Worked with farmers and Natural England to add value to agri-environment schemes – by helping farms sign-up to the 'upland' element of the Environmental Stewardship Scheme and by targeting sites for inclusion in Higher Level Stewardship (HLS). We helped 158 farms to join the upland element of Environmental Stewardship which provides financial support to disadvantaged upland farms so they can continue to manage the upland landscape and ecosystems for the benefit of the nation. We were able to add value to standard HLS agreements by using our specific local knowledge of the National Park habitats and our relationships with farmers to identify target sites and to inform better management prescriptions. Our 'Action Area' based approach means we are able to consider how agreements on individual farms fit together on a landscape scale. In the last year we have input into 15 new and 20 existing HLS agreements including prescriptions for: heath restoration; grip blocking on bogs; woodland creation; meadow seeding; habitat management for wading birds; bracken control, and; capital works. The area of land covered by agreements that include HLS options increased by nearly 14,000ha in the last year to 54,283ha⁴ representing 64% of the farmed area of the Park. However, a funding embargo on adding capital works to existing agreements meant that we were unable to add many beneficial prescriptions identified for existing agreements.

⁴ The figure for HLS includes all land within the Park boundary for farms with HLS agreements, but includes land on those farms which is managed under entry level options as it is not possible to split the data from Natural England.

Completed biodiversity actions – to monitor and improve important habitats and species. Examples of biodiversity work completed in the year include: surveying of 35 hay meadows to target sites for inclusion in HLS agreements; gaining agreements for over 300ha of native woodland planting at 15 sites; working with volunteers to survey and maintain 9 native woodland sites; working with volunteers to improve mires by blocking grips on Claudhole Moss and removing spruce regeneration on Pundershaw; working with volunteers and local communities to survey pipistrelle bat and barn owl populations, and; establishing a new colony of Jacob’s Ladder at Linbriggs by transplanting seedlings.

100% of the 12,453ha of Sites of Special Scientific Interest were retained in favourable or recovering condition for a second year although the amount in the top category of ‘favourable’ declined by approximately 500ha in the year. Of the 17 habitats or species covered by Biodiversity Action Plans 10 are considered to be improving, 3 stable, and 4 declining. The new Jacob’s Ladder colony has moved this species from stable to improving, but the continuing decline in the Parks Black Grouse population is a significant concern with action planned in 2011/12 to address this.

We have assisted with the understanding, value and care of the historic environment and archaeological heritage by:

Developing a ‘heritage at risk’ project – to reduce the number of scheduled monuments in the Park classified as ‘at risk’. The constrained external funding environment meant that this project was delayed, however by working in partnership with English Heritage we were able to establish the project and recruit a project officer at the end of the year. Early work has involved scoping the project and it is anticipated that between 20 and 40 volunteers will be trained to monitor and maintain sites on an ongoing basis and that a targeted action plan will be produced to help improve the condition of monuments.

23 (10%) of the Parks 228 Listed Buildings remain ‘at risk’ after 2 were removed from the register in the year. 240 (56%) of the Parks 430 scheduled monuments remain ‘at risk’⁵ which represents static performance over a 3 year period. The lack of progress was partly due to funding constraints within the Environmental Stewardship scheme meaning that capital works to some target sites were not possible. We recognise that a more robust and targeted plan is required to improve our performance otherwise we will miss delivering one of our key objectives.

Indicator Title	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Assm’t
% SSSI and NNR in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition in:					
a) NPA Management	-	-	100%	100%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
b) the National Park as a whole	87%	92%	100%	100%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
Changes in areas and populations of biodiversity importance (LBAP condition)					
a) Improving	9	9	9	10	<input type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) Stable	4	4	4	3	
c) Declining	4	4	4	4	

⁵ The number of scheduled monuments in the Park will reduce from 430 to 424 with the amalgamation of 7 designations to 1 at Ingram Farm. This is not yet shown in the statistics.

Number of Listed Buildings 'at risk' in the National Park	26	25	25	23	
a) Number of Listed Buildings 'at risk' rescued during the year	0	1	0	2	<input type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) % of Listed Buildings 'at risk' rescued during the year	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	8.0%	
Changes in Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) risk status					
a) Number in High risk category	77	67	65	64	
b) Number in Medium risk category	183	172	173	176	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
c) Number in Low risk category	170	191	192	190	
a) Number of scheduled monuments 'at risk' rescued during the year through NNPA actions	-	-	12	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↓
b) % of scheduled monuments 'at risk' rescued during the year through NNPA actions	-	-	5.0%	0.0%	
a) Number of Conservation Areas	1	1	1	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
b) % of Conservation Areas with up-to-date character appraisals	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Use of the Building Design Guide in relevant planning decisions					
a) Number of relevant applications	-	33	40	26	<input type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) Percentage of relevant application where Building Design Guide used	-	75.76%	37.50%	80.77%	
Positive planning actions for protected species in relevant planning applications					
a) Number of relevant applications	-	12	17	9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
b) Percentage of relevant applications with actions for protected species	-	100%	100%	100%	

Good Performance

Acceptable Performance

Poor Performance

↑ Improving Trend

= Static Trend

↓ Declining Trend

Aim 3. A Living Working Landscape for Now and The Future

We have contributed to new and better approaches to sustainable land and water management by:

Working with farmers, Natural England and the Forestry Commission to improve land management – We have used research undertaken as part of the 'Cheviot Futures Climate Adaptation' programme to inform sustainable land management techniques and worked these into Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) prescriptions. We have also utilised the England Woodland Grant Scheme to develop agreements to secure native woodland planting. These actions will help to maintain soils and nutrients by reducing erosion, surface run-off, and flooding.

Working with the Environment Agency to deliver their catchment sensitive farming initiative – We have delivered the 'Sheep Dip' project which risk assessed dipping facilities and prioritised facilities for improvement that represented a high risk of causing pollution. The project covers the Till, Tweed, Coquet, and Aln catchments providing increased protection to 19 watercourses in total. Over the duration of the project 20 farmers attended a

seminar raising awareness of the problems caused by pollution and we have undertaken 53 risk assessments. In the last year, 10 facilities have been upgraded with a further 10 facilities targeted for improvement by the end of the project in July 2011. However, due to funding constraints a further 9 facilities that were targeted for improvement via HLS capital grants are unlikely to go ahead.

Undertaking a farm survey – We commissioned a farm survey covering 50 representative farms to better understand the condition and sustainability of the industry in the National Park. The survey covered a broad range of topics including; the economics of upland farming; farm diversification, and; attitudes towards conservation, climate change, succession planning, and the Authority. The results were benchmarked against the Defra annual farm business survey to identify the differences between farming within Northumberland National Park compared to outside the Park and nationally. The results of the survey will be published in summer 2011.

We have contributed to increasing understanding about, and demonstrating the practice of, sustainable development and responses to climate change by:

Operating the Sustainable Development Fund – Our peer performance assessment found that the Fund is being used well and our wider work on sustainable development to be an exemplar. Working through our 'Action Areas' our Sustainable Development Fund has supported 17 projects with £177,000 and levered in £397,000 of matched funding (ratio of 1:2.25) in the last year to assist projects that demonstrate approaches to sustainable living. For example we provided funding towards a low carbon refurbishment at Greenhead School to improve the buildings environmental performance whilst reducing running costs and improving the learning environment. The scheme was used to teach pupils about climate change, insulation and renewable energy and we are working with the school to achieve 'eco-school' status. We also provided funding towards the upgrading of Ingram Village Hall to fully insulate the floor, walls and roof of the Hall and to install solar photovoltaic panels and an air source heat pump to heat the building. We are supporting the community's bid to become the greenest community in England.

Delivering climate change mitigation measures – Our residents' survey identified the levels of insulation in properties and residents' energy consumption behaviour. From this information, our partner 'Northumberland Warmzones' is working with residents to provide advice on energy saving and access to grants to improve insulation levels. In the past year we used our positive planning policies to grant permission for 12 schemes that included micro-renewable energy generation. The schemes included: wind; solar; air source heat pump; ground source heat pump, and; biomass technologies. We have installed 6 electric vehicle charging points at 3 sites; the first publicly available in a UK National Park to contribute to establishing a regional charging network and to pioneer the use of electric vehicles in rural areas. We are trialling an electric vehicle throughout 2011. Through our 'Action Area' approach we have provided advice and funding to local communities and businesses to improve sustainability. We have contributed too, or undertaken feasibility studies for 5 potential micro-renewable energy sites and have provided advice or funding to deliver 2 energy reduction or renewable energy schemes.

Delivering climate change adaptation measures – we developed a Climate Change Adaptation Plan and progressed the 'Cheviot Futures' programme. We have drafted our first Climate Change Adaptation Plan which risk assesses our services against the impacts of climate change and has identified the adaptation measures required. The report will be submitted to Defra in 2011. The Cheviot Futures climate adaptation programme was delayed in the year due to budget uncertainty within funding, however a full review was held

and funding secured to continue the programme through to 2013. Two project staff were recruited towards the end of the year and have developed a fully resourced delivery plan. A multi-agency wildfire training event was successfully completed in the year. We have moved from level 1 to level 2 of the adapting to climate change indicator and are aiming to achieve level 3 in 2011.

To assist business growth in sectors which sensitively make use of the natural, historical and cultural qualities of the National Park we have:

Supported local businesses with advice, support and funding – Through our ‘Action Area’ approach and utilising Northumberland Uplands LEADER funding in addition to our own Sustainable Development and ‘Action Area’ funds we have provided 21 grants to businesses totalling £195,294 and leveraging in £248,534 in match funding. We have provided advice and support to many more businesses and have supported the creation of 7 new businesses in the last year. For example we provided funding and support to a collective of small local businesses to run the ‘Rothbury Food and Craft Fair’ with the collective then able to repeat the fair independently in another location.

Supported sustainable tourism – We published a Visitor Guide, supported tourism events, and provided support through our Action Area approach. Our Visitor Guide provides information on what to see and do in the National Park and promotes visits to destinations and events. 58 businesses advertised in the guide with 30,000 copies distributed throughout the region and beyond and a further 90,000 copies downloaded from our website. We delivered the second year of the ‘Coast & Country’ programme in partnership with the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to help local tourism businesses to utilise the protected landscapes in building and marketing their businesses whilst acting as ambassadors for the landscapes. We delivered 5 Coast and Country events to 19 tourism providers and a total of 121 participants. We also supported and promoted the ‘Outdoor Northumberland Festival’ where 14 providers delivered 68 events between September and October. The National Park attracted 1.51m tourists contributing £61.4m to the economy of the National Park with these figures rising to 1.79m tourists and £140m for the wider Action Areas. The need to reduce our budget will result in less direct work on sustainable tourism by the Authority in future.

Helped to maintain a viable farming community – By working with farmers and Natural England to secure additional environmental benefits for the National Park we have also helped to secure additional income for the farming community. Agri-environment scheme income to the National Park totalled £5.43m last year with £4.08m of this coming from schemes with Higher Level Stewardship options. £1m of this income was directed toward capital works which is usually distributed to local contractors and suppliers. We added value to 15 new and 20 existing Higher Level Stewardship schemes in the year.

Indicator Title	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Assm't
Adapting to climate change	-	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	<input type="checkbox"/> ↑
Business grant awards inline with National Park Authority purposes					
a) Number of grants awarded	-	37	28	21	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
b) Value of grants awarded	-	£208,602	£142,918	£195,294	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
c) Value of levered/matched funding	-	£951,049	£556,274	£248,534	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓

Businesses and groups using the Green Tourism Business Scheme	18	20	19	18	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
Importance of the visitor economy (value & volume of tourism)				PI reports previous years data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
a) Value of tourism (£ million) - Northumberland National Park	£61.4	£59.1	£61.4		
b) Number of tourists (million) - Northumberland National Park	1.50	1.45	1.51		
a) Value of tourism (£ million) - Action Areas (inc. NNP)	£157.3	£139.5	£140.0		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
b) Number of tourists (million) - Action Areas (inc. NNP)	1.81	1.73	1.79		

Good Performance Acceptable Performance Poor Performance
 Improving Trend = Static Trend ↓ Declining Trend

Aim 4. Thriving Communities

We supported communities' connections to, and appreciation of, the National Park and engaged them in shaping its future by:

Continuing to operate our 'Action Area' approach – Our peer performance assessment found that our 'Action Area' working is “extremely effective in engaging communities” and that it has “empowered local communities and businesses to deliver National Park purposes by building networks linked to support and funding”. We aim to continue to build on and refine this approach.

Reviewing the process by which we engage communities – Feedback from the 63 participants at our consultation events on how we should engage and communicate with communities has been incorporated into our revised 'Statement of Community Involvement' which covers all aspects of the Authority's engagement, not only in relation to planning.

Holding a National Park Forum to hear feedback from residents and stakeholders – In October 2010 we held our second annual National Park Forum which was attended by 65 participants. The Forum provides a formal mechanism for us to hear feedback from residents and other stakeholders on the issues affecting the National Park that are important to them. It also provided us with an opportunity to inform members of the community about our work and that of the wider Management Plan Partnership in shaping the National Park.

Preparing for the Localism Bill by applying for the Neighbourhood Planning Front Runners scheme – In February 2011 we submitted a bid on behalf of three parish councils within the National Park to develop one of the first neighbourhood plans. The new plan will be developed by local communities with the Authority providing support to communities.

We have striven to ensure effective infrastructure (services and facilities) are available to support communities in and around the National Park by:

Undertaking our annual facilities survey for the National Park – We identified the level of access to essential services such as shops and schools across the National Park. Whilst the survey identifies that communities in the National Park continue to have access to essential services, it also shows that the availability and/or quality of broadband connections is a major issue.

Working through the Northumberland Uplands LEADER Local Action Group we secured nearly £250,000 of European Union funds for a rural broadband pilot to provide reliable broadband to the some of the most difficult to reach areas of Northumberland. The implementation of this project has been delayed by up to 12 months due to a need to secure State Aid approval from the European Union.

Supported and provided funding to operate the Hadrian’s Wall Bus – We have continued to support and promote the Hadrian’s Wall bus which carried 42,461 passengers last year, an increase of 5.5% on the previous year despite an overall decline in visitor numbers. As well as providing a sustainable way for visitors to access the National Park, 32% of passengers surveyed stated that it was their “only way of getting out”.

Working on sustainable infrastructure for the future – We have supported or funded 5 renewable energy feasibility studies to support community energy requirements in the future and have worked with the community at Ingram to support their bid to become the greenest community in England. We have installed electric vehicle charging points to provide the infrastructure for this emerging technology.

We have helped to ensure people have opportunities to work in, live in and contribute to resilient communities in and around the National Park by:

Supporting local communities with advice, support and funding – Through our ‘Action Area’ approach we have provided advice and support to many community and voluntary groups. We have directed financial support into community initiatives by using our won ‘Action Area’ and Sustainable Development funds as well as utilising Northumberland Uplands LEADER funding to provide 79 grants to communities totalling £508,621 and leveraging in £802,152 in match funding in the last year. Further, we provided 14 grants totalling £43,305 to secure £212,534 of match funding from other organisations⁶ to deliver sustainable living projects. For example we provided funding and support to the community of Bellingham to establish a community-run library in their Town Hall following the announcement that budget cuts would result in the closure of the council run service.

Providing pathways to employment via high quality training in response to local need – 41 trainees from the 51 originally recruited on our ‘Traditional Boundaries Traditional Skill’ project have gone into employment with a further 2 trainees moving into higher education. 34 trainees work in boundary management of rural based roles in and around the National Park. 7 trainees from the 8 originally recruited on our ‘Upland Farming Traineeship’ pilot project have gone into employment in farming related roles. 6 are in paid employment and 1 in a voluntary role. Our Youth Volunteer Initiative trains and mentors 16-18 year olds and provided a career pathway for 2 young people in the last year. The initiative will be expanded in 2011/12.

Indicator Title	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Assm’t
Community grant awards inline with National Park Authority purposes					
a) Number of grants awarded	-	92	69	93	☑ ↑
b) Value of grants awarded	-	£454,494	£365,840	£551,926	☑ ↑
c) Value of levered/matched funding	-	£2,418,859	£719,319	£1,014,686	☑ ↑

☑ Good Performance ☐ Acceptable Performance ☒ Poor Performance
 ↑ Improving Trend = Static Trend ↓ Declining Trend

⁶ Other organisations are charities, not-for-profit and public sector organisations

Aim 5. A Valued Asset

We have promoted the social and economic contribution of the National Park to the North East of England by:

Contributing to key regional groups and strategies – We have ensured the value of the National Park is recognised within key sub regional strategies including the Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy and the Northumberland Economic Strategy, influencing themes such as: low carbon economy; (rural) broadband, and; the value of the historic environment within the Economic Strategy. We have actively contributed to the Climate Change North East Group demonstrating; the value of the National Park for storing carbon and reducing the impacts of downstream flooding, and; in demonstrating how rural businesses and communities can mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The National Park has contributed to a broader network of protected areas by:

Networking regionally, nationally and internationally – Our Chairman chaired the English National Park Authorities Association which works to inform national policy towards National Parks and we contributed to the Association of National Park Authorities to share best practice. We have presented at national events (organised by Defra’s national rural network) on subjects such as using the LEADER approach for delivering the government’s forestry objectives and to council’s on the value of the Action Area approach to ensure that LEADER is delivered in a bottom-up manner in England.

We have assisted the Danish government to establish a the new national park of Mols Bjerger by providing learning lessons from our approach to setting a vision, using a partnership approach to the National Park Management Plan and deploying our Action Area approach to delivery.

We have helped ensure the value of the National Park is clearly demonstrated in the policies and actions of those who have influence on the National Park by:

Coordinating the National Park Management Plan Partnership – We have worked with partners to ensure positive actions for the National Park are embedded within partners’ policies and plans. Our peer performance assessment identified the work of the Management Plan Partnership as an exemplar with an extremely high level of ownership and connection to the priorities within the National Park Management Plan.

Contributing to a Defra Study – We contributed to a study to demonstrate the environmental, social, and economic benefits that National Parks offer and the additional value that National Park Authorities contribute to these wider societal benefits.

Indicator Title	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Assm’t
Awareness of Northumberland National Park (local, regional & national)					
National	3%	3%	3%	3%	☒ =
Partner survey score - NNPA as an effective partner	-	TBC	TBC	75.0%	☐ n/a

Good Performance
 Acceptable Performance
 Poor Performance
 ↑ Improving Trend
 = Static Trend
 ↓ Declining Trend

Aim 6. An Excellent Organisation

We have continued to deliver value for money through:

Peer performance review – We completed our peer performance review in the year and received a very positive assessment. We were found to be performing to an acceptable standard in one area, to a very high standard in four areas and to an excellent standard in two areas. There were no areas where the Authority was considered to be under-performing. We found the review very helpful in identifying our areas of strength and where we need to improve and this learning was utilised in developing our budget reduction proposals and in developing the forward work programme set out in this document.

Budget reductions and a change management programme – The original work programme identified a number of efficiency savings, invest to save initiatives, and service reviews but much of this activity was overtaken by the need for a more fundamental review of the Authority's priorities and services. The result is that a change management programme was developed to enable the Authority to operate a balanced budget reduced by 33% by 2014. A number of initiative such as investing in carbon efficient pool cars and solar voltaic panels were progressed to achieve ongoing savings.

Provision of effective statutory functions – We continued to operate an efficient and effective organisation with positive audit reports and our finances managed to within 2.8% of our budget⁷ for the year. Our Development Management service processed planning applications efficiently with 75% of 'major' 88% of 'minor' and 94% of 'other' applications determined within the statutory timescales and 88% of applicants stating they were satisfied with the service received.

We have developed our staff, volunteers and board members through:

Staff development – Much of the planned work such as individual manager training plans was put on hold as it was overtaken by the requirement for significant staff restructuring. For staff losing their jobs, we arranged for transitional support including workshops on how to manage finances and one to one support to help find alternative employment. We recognise that with many staff roles changing as a consequence of the restructuring exercise there is a need to support staff with appropriate training and development moving forward. Following reassessment, we retained our Investors in People award and our staff sickness levels remained low at an average 5.0 days⁸ absence per person.

Volunteer development – We began to implement the actions from a review of our volunteering service. This involved enhancing the role of a core of 41 voluntary rangers and increasing support for their training and development. The approach allows for others to volunteer on a more *ad hoc* basis to suit their individual circumstances. We also piloted the Youth Volunteer initiative to develop volunteers from a younger age group and will expand on this in the coming year.

Member development - We worked with our Members to produce a set of proposals for improved governance arrangements for Northumberland National Park in order to enhance

⁷ The Authority had a 2.8% unplanned underspend against its budget.

⁸ Staff sickness statistics are calculated on a 'Full Time Equivalent' basis. The figure of 5.0 days is a more accurate method of calculating sickness (on a monthly basis) but the official statistic rises to 5.36 days per full time equivalent when calculated using the national methodology. The national methodology is skewed by a large difference in our staff numbers between the start and end of the year (due to traineeships ending) which over expresses sickness.

local accountability. These proposals were consulted on at three local events, via the website, letters to all residents of the national park and through our partners. The results were collated and will be used by Defra to inform their changes to our governance arrangements.

We have worked through partnerships by:

Working directly with partners on projects and focusing partners delivery through the Management Plan Partnership – We utilise business and community partnerships to deliver through our ‘Action Area’ approach and utilised the Management Plan Partnership to co-ordinate partners delivery of the National Park Management Plan. We have worked with Natural England to add value to Higher Level Stewardship schemes and to improve access on National Trails. We have worked with the Environment Agency to reduce the risks of pollution from sheep dips. We have worked with colleges and training bodies to deliver training projects and with universities to undertake research. We have worked with the Energy Saving Trust and Northumberland Warmzones to improve the environmental performance of properties in the Park and we have worked with Northumberland Uplands LEADER Local Action Group to deliver rural development initiatives. Our 2010 partner survey found that 75% of our partners found the Authority to be an effective partner.

We have ensured our services are available to all in our diverse society by:

Operating an Equality Forum – to receive feedback from under-represented groups on access to our services and to wider service provision within the National Park. Feedback from the forum is used to inform our own services, and policies for the Park itself. We were assessed as having reached level 3 of the Equality Standard before this was replaced with the Equality Framework.

Undertaking outreach projects – such as delivering the second year of the three year Mosaic project designed to engage with Black and Minority Ethnic communities and by piloting the Youth Volunteer initiative. The Mosaic project has provided us with feedback on how to make recreational sites more appealing to minority groups which we will build into the management plans for these sites. One of our Youth Volunteers has agreed to become a ‘Changemaker’ and will work with us to improve our engagement with young people.

We have ‘walked the talk’ on climate change by:

Delivering against our Low Carbon Park plan – We have supported and enabled businesses and communities in the national park to reduce their carbon footprint and have led by example by ‘walking the talk’ on climate change. We set a green travel plan for staff, volunteers and Members and made further physical changes to our buildings and their heating systems to reduce the use of fossil fuels. We reduced our carbon emissions to 253 tonnes, a 9% reduction on the previous year and an 18% reduction on our 2008/09 baseline of 309 tonnes. This outcome represents a genuine improvement in performance as the impact of budget reductions did not impact our estate or significantly reduce our services in the last year. The outcome was achieved by benefiting from the full year effect of previous renewable energy improvements, further renewable energy installations, and improvements in transport emissions as a result of our green travel plan.

Indicator Title	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Assm't
Inclusive Authority - level of the Equality Standard attained	Level 1	Level 1	Level 3	Level 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per FTE	6.83	3.99	4.62	5.36	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↓
Member participation in attending committees	-	-	86%	79%	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
Income generation - trading accounts profit performance (£'000)	-	103.6	136.4	129.6	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
Financial outturn (variance to forecast reserves position as a % of total expenditure)	-	2.3%	3.5%	2.8%	<input type="checkbox"/> ↑
IT critical system available in core working hours	-	98.98%	93.25%	97.76%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
Processing of planning applications (major, minor, other)					
a) % of major applications determined within 13 weeks	no apps	100%	100%	75%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↓
b) % of minor applications determined within 8 weeks	83%	68%	95%	88%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↓
c) % of 'other' applications determined within 8 weeks	84%	71%	96%	94%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↓
% of planning applicants satisfied with the service received	53%	78%	72%	88%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
Carbon Dioxide (CO2) reduction from National Park Authority operations					
a) Percentage reduction in CO2 emissions	-	n/a	9.6%	9.0%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↓
b) Total CO2 emissions from Authority operations (Kg)	-	308,919	279,252	253,403	-
Level of air quality - reduction in NOx and PM10 emissions through Authority operations					
a) NOx - oxides of nitrogen emissions (Kg)	-	368	380	235	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) PM10 - particulate matter emissions (Kg)	-	16	16	10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑

Good Performance Acceptable Performance Poor Performance
 Improving Trend = Static Trend ↓ Declining Trend

Section 3. Delivering the Vision – Forward Work Programme (2011/12)

Aim 1. A Welcoming Park

Our aim is to put people and their connections with the landscape at the heart of the National Park.

1.1 In contributing to an exceptional National Park experience we will:

- a) Develop and begin to implement an action plan with the communities for enhancing the visitor welcome in Elsdon, Falstone, Alwinton and Ingram.

Targets:

- Action plan agreed by October 2011;
- First improvements completed by March 2012.

- b) Work with partners to develop a new tourism partnership that will contribute to National Park purposes.

Targets:

- Partnership established by March 2012;
- Continue to monitor visitor infrastructure (rights of way, car parks, etc) to assist improvements in the private and community sector through our 'Action Area' working.

- c) Transfer visitor centre service delivery at Rothbury and Ingram from the Authority to business and community partners.

Targets:

- Tendering process completed by September 2011;
- New delivery arrangements implemented by April 2013.

- d) Improve existing and develop new permissive access to the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site by targeting improvements via Higher Level Stewardship schemes on the National Trust estate.

Targets:

- Complete works to the 'easy access' path at Steel Rigg by February 2012;
- Replace 4 stiles with gates to improve accessibility on the Hadrian's Wall National Trail between Housesteads and Steel Rigg by March 2012.

- e) Prepare and oversee implementation of an annual programme of works on National Trails.

Targets:

- Maintain sections of flagged path and boardwalk (totalling 250metres) at 7 sites along the border ridge on the Pennine Way by the end of February 2012;
- Improve the route at Brocolitia on the Hadrian's Wall National Trail by re-locating the existing flagged path onto a better line by the end of June 2011;
- Develop with Partners a suitable regime of future maintenance for National Trails by March 2012.

- f) Survey the condition of 15% of the Public Rights of Way network to inform the preparation of the annual maintenance/improvement programme.

Targets:

- Engage 10 volunteers in surveying 10% of the Public Rights of Way network by the end of February 2011;
- Complete national benchmarking surveys on 5% of the Public Rights of Way network for May 2011 and November 2011;

- g) Submit Heritage Lottery Fund Stage 1 application for 'The Sill – Wild Landscape Centre'.

Targets:

- Develop 'national' project bid with partners and submit by November 2011;
- Raise awareness of the bid regionally and identify advocates from the local community and partner organisations to speak for the project from April 2011 onwards;
- Secure in-principle match funding commitments by April 2012.

1.2 To help achieve a wider and more diverse audience we will:

- a) Deliver the final year of the MOSAIC project and embed the culture learning from the project into the Authority's ongoing delivery.

Targets:

- Deliver the third and final year of the Mosaic project including; hosting 1 Group Leader visit; 3 events jointly delivered by Community Champions and staff, and; Community Champions officially recognised within NNPA volunteer service to maintain the legacy of the project;
- Work through the Youth Volunteer Initiative to engage with younger and more diverse audiences;
- Support the 'Changemaker' to deliver a taster event to recruit further Youth Volunteers by August 2011.

- b) Work in partnership with the Disabled Ramblers Association and land owners to improve access for the less able to the National Park.

Targets:

- Develop 2 accessible routes and hosting 2 events for the Disabled Ramblers Association in the National Park in summer 2011.

- c) Develop a management plan for the Walltown recreation site and deliver schedules of work to improve accessibility on the most heavily used rights of way.

Targets:

- Complete a management plan for Walltown to include how the site will be developed to improve recreation, conservation, and accessibility by March 2012;
- Deliver improvement works on the 10 most heavily used rights of way by the end of February 2012 exchanging 10 stiles with gates to improve accessibility.

- d) Review the role of the Local Access Forum as part of the Authority's governance review.

Targets:

- Review complete by end December 2011;
- Begin implementation of improved arrangements by March 2012.

- e) Maintain a high standard and broad range of information services.

Targets:

- Deliver information services from 3 National Park Centres from April 2011 exceeding levels of visitor satisfaction of 90% by March 2012;
 - Publish the Visitor Guide 2012 by February 2012;
 - Market an outreach activity to focus on engaging people in the urban areas of Tyne and Wear and Northumberland County towns. Specifically, attendance at 2 Great North Museum events (target 12,000 footfall at each event); Newcastle Mela (25,000 footfall); Northumberland County Show (26,000 footfall), and; Hexham's Picnic in the Park family event (1,000 footfall).
- f) Use the website and social media to promote the National Park to underrepresented groups.

Targets:

- Use the learning from the 'Sounding The Sill' project to develop new web and social media content aimed at under represented audiences by March 2012;
- Reach 230,000 people through the website with a minimum 80% of users rating the site as 'very good' or 'excellent'.

1.3 We will contribute to a more diverse range of learning opportunities by:

- a) Providing targeted opportunities for less experienced walkers to enjoy the National Park.

Targets:

- Deliver 15 'Walks to Wellbeing' in the National Park by February 2012 , with a minimum of 225 people attending;
 - Deliver 33 Voluntary Ranger walks and talks with a minimum of 300 people attending.
- b) Using the resource of the National Park to provide relevant and increased access to learning and educational opportunities.

Targets:

- Work with 7 schools (engaging a minimum of 150 children) within the 'Action Areas' to deliver 15 learning outside the classroom experiences in the National Park for 5-16 years olds by February 2012;
 - Develop 2 packs of educational material based on sites in the National Park (Walltown and Breamish Valley) in partnership with 2 enterprises (Roman Army Museum and Ingram Village Hall) by December 2011;
 - Assist 4 new schools reaching 100 children in Northumberland to work towards 'eco school' status using the National Park as the key learning resource.
- c) Providing relevant and increased opportunities for adults and young people to become involved in participatory learning activities and volunteering.

Targets:

- Build upon the existing Young Volunteer Initiative to enable 10 young people to be regularly participating as Youth Volunteers in the NNPA volunteer service by February 2012;
- Establish the role of a young people's 'Changemaker' in the Authority and assist the Changemaker to deliver her action plan by October 2011;
- Recruit and train 10 volunteers to deliver a wide range of events for all, linked to climate change by February 2012;

- Deliver 5 community volunteer projects by the end of March 2012;
- Provide 4 work experience placements for 14-17 year olds by the end of March 2012;
- Establish 20 regular heritage volunteers through the 'Heritage at Risk' project.

d) Identifying and securing resources to meet the Authority's skills and training objectives.

Targets:

- Review past NNPA schemes and produce a plan for the future by September 2011;
- Support a collaborative bid by Rural Development Initiatives to the Regional Growth Fund for a training scheme for new entrants to the Forestry and Farming industries;
- Provide 4 bursary training placements targeted towards 18-25 year olds by March 2012.

e) Undertake a visitor survey to understand what visitors appreciate about the National Park and how their experience could be improved.

Targets:

- Tender and design the survey by end of June 2011;
- Completed the survey by end of September 2011;
- Analysis and report presented by November 2011.

Meeting Our Business Plan Targets - What success will look like

- **75% of visitors to Northumberland National Park visitor services feel they have had an exceptional experience by 2013**
- **5% increase in visitors from the underrepresented groups of young people, disabled, and black and ethnic minorities by 2013 from the 2007 baseline and 90% of our promoted routes classified as 'easy to use' by 2013**
- **300 school children engaged annually in educational activities by 2013 and 90% of adults and young adults are in employment or education following completion of Northumberland National Park Authority apprenticeships by 2013**

Resources to deliver the priorities

<u>2010/11</u>	<u>2011/12</u>
Budget: £1,201,200	3 Year Plan: £1,174,900
Outturn: £1,259,609	Current Budget: £1,276,200

Aim 2. A Distinctive Place

Our aim is to manage, conserve and enhance the distinctive natural and cultural qualities of the National Park.

2.1 To help maintain the sense of inspiration and tranquillity we will:

- a) Prepare a Landscape Strategy in consultation with local communities, partners and other key stakeholders.

Targets:

- Early engagement complete by end May 2011;
- Formal consultation on draft Strategy January 2012;
- Strategy adopted by the Authority June 2012.

- b) Finalise the reassessment and validation of tranquillity mapping to monitor any change in areas classified as tranquil by end July 2011.

- c) Continue to lead the Northumbria Police Land Managers' Liaison Group in monitoring the legal and illegal use of the rights of way network by motorised vehicles.

Targets:

- Resolve issues on routes to the north of Brocolitia and in the Stonehaugh area by end March 2012;
- Expand the scope of the group with Northumbria Police to include fly camping and other access/visitor related issues and to cover all of the Park by end March 2012;

- d) Continue the ongoing preparation, implementation, monitoring and review of the Local Development Framework.

Targets:

- Review the Design Guide – final Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) adopted by the Authority in September 2011;
- New Landscape SPD – document adopted by the Authority in September 2011;
- Report on effectiveness of Core Strategy policies to the Authority in June 2011.

2.2 To safeguard and enhance the natural qualities and diverse habitats we will:

- a) Support positive land management practices which deliver measurable improvements in the natural environment.

Targets:

- Ensure all Countryside Stewardship Scheme agreements ending in 2011 go into Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) or Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) and deliver 12 new HLS schemes by March 2012;
- Add value to 10 existing HLS schemes by March 2012;
- In partnership with Natural England develop a monitoring framework for HLS to assess the success of positive management. Draft framework to be prepared by end March 2012;
- Complete 5 Management Statements for native woodlands managed by the Authority;

- Engage 10 volunteers to survey 20 native woodland sites managed by the Authority and complete maintenance work including improving fencing and removal of invasive species on 8 sites by March 2012.

- b) Enhance locally and regionally important geology and habitat sites by delivering 20 Biodiversity Action Plan actions by March 2012.

Targets:

- Monitor upland heath at 2 sites to assess the impact of HLS management practices on the quality of the habitat;
- Survey 20 hay meadows to monitor whether positive management practices have improved species diversity, and to develop appropriate prescriptions for sites targeted for HLS inclusion;
- Improve 2 mire sites by blocking grips and/or removing conifer;
- Restore 1 heathland site on by undertaking heather re-seeding;
- Involve 2 communities surveying potential and known bat roosts at 2 sites to monitor bat populations and increase local peoples understanding of these European protected species;
- Work with 5 volunteers to complete bird surveys (inc. Curlew) at 5 target sites to inform prescriptions for HLS agreements.

- c) Develop a programme of priority species and habitat monitoring to allow effective resource targeting.

Targets:

- Develop programme by September 2011;
- Commence programme before end March 2012.

- d) Work with partners to further develop the Black Grouse recovery project.

Target:

- Commission Population Viability Analysis modelling to be completed by April 2012.

- e) Work with partners to develop a Landscape Scale Biodiversity project.

Targets:

- Produce an 'opportunities map' for the National Park and the border uplands area to identify areas where biodiversity projects will improve connectivity and provide landscape scale benefits by December 2011;
- Scope funding options including Natural Environment Improvement Areas and Life+ funding opportunities by December 2011;
- Consult with communities and partners on project options alongside the consultation on the Landscape Strategy in January 2012.

- f) Support a Hadrian's Wall landscape partnership project with Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd and Natural England.

Targets:

- Agree next steps following successful stage 1 application to HLF by December 2011

2.3 We will assist in the understanding, value and care of the historic environment and archaeological heritage by:

- a) Working with communities and partners to develop a Historic Environment Action Plan which identifies the priorities for the historic environment.

Targets:

- Develop draft plan with partners by September 2011;
- Engagement with local communities through Parish Councils and Action Area groups during October – December 2011;
- Plan and programme for implementation developed by end December 2011.

- b) Work with community archaeology groups and volunteers to promote opportunities for community led cultural heritage research, conservation and interpretation.

Targets:

- Support 5 community based local archaeology and heritage projects by March 2012;
- Host an annual volunteer-led Historic Environment Day School by March 2012 and support volunteer activities as part of Heritage Open Days by September 2011;
- Deliver 3 talks to community or interest groups outside of the National Park to promote the Park's Historic Environment to a wider audience.

- c) Enlist the support of Universities and other research organisations, voluntary bodies and volunteers to develop projects based on the Archaeological Research Framework.

Targets:

- Publish the Archaeological Research Framework summary document on the web by September 2011;
- Meet with universities to agree priorities for research bursaries and studentships by end October 2011 and publicise bursary opportunities by end December 2011;
- Provide advice and support to 2 University research projects within and around the National Park;
- Host 1 full-time work placement student in 2011/12.

- d) Deliver the Heritage at Risk Project.

Targets:

- Appoint project officer by end April 2011;
- Produce volunteer training pack by end of June 2011;
- Produce brief for website contract by end of June 2011;
- Monument improvement programme produced by December 2011;
- Recruit and train 20 volunteers by end June 2011 and recruit a further 20 by March 2012;
- Complete a minimum of 80 volunteer days undertaking initial surveys by March 2012;
- Cyclical monument monitoring programme established by March 2012;
- Host 5 community engagement events by March 2012;
- Conserve at least 10 high and/or medium risk monuments by March 2012.

- e) Complete a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for the Kirknewton Conservation Area by December 2011.

- f) Ensure all historic sites directly within Authority management have an up-to-date condition assessment:

Targets:

- Complete 3 quinquennial reviews (Thirlwall, Low Cleughs, Tosson Limekiln) and produce a schedule of any necessary works, depending on the results by end March 2012;

- Carry out an ongoing programme of vegetation clearance and vermin control for all sites by March 2012;
- Carry out enhanced maintenance as identified in previous condition assessments for Redheugh Dovecote, Tosson Tower, and Low Cleughs by September 2011.

Meeting Our Business Plan Targets - What success will look like

- **The National Park will continue to be the most tranquil part of England**
- **98% of SSSIs (and NNRs) in favourable/unfavourable improving condition**
- **60% of scheduled monuments and 95% Listed Buildings at low risk by 2013.**

Resources to deliver the priorities

<u>2010/11</u>	<u>2011/12</u>	
Budget: £886,800	3 Year Plan: £902,300	
Outturn: £870,056	Current Budget: £758,800	

Aim 3. A Living Working Landscape for Now and The Future

We will help the Park adapt to change by applying new approaches, together with traditional techniques

3.1 We will contribute to new and better approaches to sustainable land and water management by:

- a) Continuing to work with the Linhope Estate in the Upper Breamish Valley to implement an estate wide management plan.

Targets:

- Monitor the progress in restoring upland heath habitats by surveying areas re-seeded with heather, including the 10 trial plots by March 2012;
- Assist the Estate to develop a sustainable network of access tracks, including carrying out repairs to priority sections of the Salters Road by November 2011.

- b) Encouraging better and more sustainable land management practices.

Target:

- Develop agreements to create 10ha of native woodland and fence 5ha of existing woodland by March 2012.

- c) Ensuring all National Park rivers are of the highest quality and minimising the risk and impacts of flooding to communities and businesses.

Targets:

- Work with Northumberland Community Flooding Partnership and the Tyne Rivers Trust to develop improvements to both the physical and ecological quality of the Haltwhistle Burn, from the source at Greenlee Lough down to the Tyne. Action plan in place by July 2011.

- Adopt a management plan for Greenlee Lough and agree water quality monitoring locations and frequency with Natural England and the Environment Agency by March 2012;
 - Reduce the risk of diffuse pollution to water courses by working with farmers in the Till and Coquet catchments to complete improvements to 10 sheep dipping facilities by August 2011.
- d) Working with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to develop best practise for managing a military estate within a National Park and helping develop the Defence Infrastructure Organisation's (DIO) emerging Integrated Rural Management Plan for Otterburn Ranges.

Targets:

- Follow through outstanding/ongoing 'Conditions and Undertakings' from the Otterburn Public Enquiry;
- Develop a revised timescale with DIO for completion of the Otterburn Integrated Rural Management Plan;
- Review and agree membership and terms of reference for the Otterburn Environmental Steering Group and agree an action plan by end of March 2012;
- Work with Defence Estates to complete a byelaw review by March 2012;
- Brief ENPAA Military Liaison Group to embed learning lessons by March 2012.

3.2 We will contribute to increasing understanding about, and demonstrating the practice of, sustainable development and responses to climate change by:

- a) Proactively engaging communities, businesses, residents, visitors and partners in working towards a Low Carbon National Park. We will complete Low Carbon Framework projects by December 2012.

Targets:

- Work with partners to survey the remaining properties within the National Park to establish base line data on fuel poverty and energy efficiency by December 2011;
- Support 50 energy saving or renewable energy measures to properties within the National Park;
- Work with Northumberland County Council to complete a low carbon feasibility study and make improvements for an off-gas grid community;
- Meet with 6 estates to raise awareness of sustainable development and climate change by December 2011;
- Complete the 'Plugged in Places' project to establish an electric car charging infrastructure of 15 posts at 10 sites by December 2011;
- Trial and evaluate the use of electric vehicles by April 2012;
- Complete research into the micro-renewable potential for hydro, solar photovoltaic, wind, and biomass within the National Park and share the conclusions.

- b) Encouraging the production of renewable energy from sources compatible with the National Parks distinctive qualities.

Targets:

- Deliver phase 2 of the on-farm micro-hydro project on 5 farms in the Cheviots by April 2012, including;
- Assist in completing the necessary ecological surveys at 3 sites by October 2011, and;
- Complete a bespoke design for 1 on-farm micro-hydro scheme by December 2011.

- c) Protecting and enhancing carbon sequestration within the National Park.

Target:

- Undertake further research to inform carbon sequestration capacity in the National Park by March 2012 and share the conclusions.

- d) Deliver the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) to aid businesses and communities with sustainable living initiatives.

Targets:

- Allocate £125k of grant funding to projects by March 2012;
- Support the SDF Grants Panel in working more closely with the Northumberland Uplands LEADER Local Action Group to scope a joint delivery process.

- e) Submit a climate change adaptation plan to Defra identify what the Authority and its partners will be doing to adapt to the opportunities and threats presented by climate change.

Target:

- Adaptation report submitted to Defra by October 2011 [including actions in f) to h) below].

- f) Deliver the first year activities of Phase 2 of the Cheviot Futures Climate Change Adaptation project.

Targets:

- Develop 10 farm resilience plans identifying natural hazards and mitigation actions by March 2012;
- 8 pilot resilience schemes to be in place by March 2012;
- Establish a new lake at Linhope for use in fighting future wildfires by October 2011;
- Deliver 2 Wildfire specialist training events in conjunction with Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service involving 12 participants by March 2012;
- Install a weather station and webcam at the top of the Breamish Valley enabling information to be gathered on a catchment scale by October 2011;
- Test the Land Management Carbon Plan methodology on 2 farms in the Park by April 2012.

- g) Work with the Northumberland Fire Group to develop new approaches to the prevention and control of wildfires.

Targets:

- Incorporate a preventative burning regime into 1 Higher Level Stewardship Agreement by December 2011;
- Engage with Linhope Estate, Northumberland Estate, and the Ministry of Defence estate to develop collaborative burning programmes by end of March 2012.

- h) Work with the Northumberland Community Flood Partnership to develop new approaches to the prevention, management and aftermath of floods.

Target:

- Support the development of flood alleviation measures by one community flood Group by end of March 2012.

3.3 To assist business growth in sectors which sensitively make use of the natural, historical and cultural qualities of the National Park, we will:

- a) Work with local businesses to sensitively utilise the qualities of the National Park.

Targets:

- Support and advise 30 new and existing businesses by March 2012;
- Provide 20 business grants by March 2012.

- b) Support the development and marketing for nature-based tourism in the National Park.

Targets:

- Engage with 5 businesses to promote nature-based tourism around Greenlee Lough on Hadrian's Wall and in the Cheviots;
- Support the development and marketing for 4 active pursuit initiatives through the Outdoor Northumberland Network;
- Help 50 local businesses to utilise the National Park designation in their marketing by delivering the final year of 'Coast and Country' Training by end of August 2011.

- c) Provide advice, funding and technical support to businesses and communities.

Targets:

- Continue to publish a monthly Funding Bulletin reaching 500 people to highlight funding opportunities and best practice projects;
- Undertake funding searches for new projects that come forward for support;
- Provide advice and guidance on writing funding applications to colleagues, communities and businesses;
- Assist the Sill Project team in securing match funding by the end of March 2012;
- Investigating Life+ funding opportunities for a landscape scale biodiversity project by July 2011.

Meeting Our Business Plan Targets - What success will look like

- **All water bodies classified as within good ecological condition by 2013 and 80% of farmed land in Higher Level Stewardship showing positive management (monitoring framework to be developed by March 2011)**
(Note suggested rewording of target: All water bodies classified as within good ecological condition by 2013 and 75% of the farmed land in Higher Level Stewardship. 75% of HLS sites monitored achieving their indicators of success (monitoring framework to be developed by March 2012)).
- **Carbon capture/sequestration within the National Park improved by 500 tonnes per year (equivalent to 500 trees per year) from the 2009 baseline**
- **5% increase in farming, tourism, food, crafts and retail micro enterprises within the National Park and Action Areas making use of the natural and cultural qualities from 2008 baseline**

Resources to deliver the priorities

<u>2010/11</u>	<u>2011/12</u>
Budget: £667,100	3 Year Plan: £773,700
Outturn: £579,353	Current Budget: £768,400

Aim 4. Thriving Communities

We will contribute to the thriving and vibrant communities which have a strong sense of place and an economy grounded in the natural and cultural qualities of the National Park

4.1 We will support communities' connections to, and appreciation of, the National Park and engage them in shaping its future by:

- a) Working with our local parish councils, Northumberland County Council and local communities to test approaches to neighbourhood planning through the Action Area approach.

Targets:

- Work with parish councils, 'Action Area' groups, Northumberland County Council groupings and the Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group to identify key local issues for residents by December 2011;
- Discuss options with all parish councils by end December 2011;
- Implement the first new neighbourhood planning approach in 3 parish councils by March 2012;
- Host a forum for local communities and key public bodies to explore how local communities can engage and influence local services by March 2012.

- b) Reviewing the impact of 'Action Area' working on the National Park and its residents by end March 2012.

Targets:

- Develop methods for gaining information on the benefits and impact of past community and business projects on residents by December 2011;
- Implement necessary changes to 'Action Area' targeting by March 2012.

- c) Continuing to develop the role of the National Park Forum and Action Area groups to secure community engagement in the work of the Authority and to inform future policy:

Targets:

- Review the role of the National Park Forum and Action Area groups as part of the governance review by December 2011;
- Invite local residents to participate in scrutiny and advisory groups reviewing the Authority's work on an ongoing basis by October 2011.

4.2 We will strive to ensure effective infrastructure (services and facilities) are available to support communities in and around the National Park by:

- a) Undertaking an annual local facilities survey to inform decisions on planning applications.

Targets:

- Survey completed by end April 2011;
- Results published in the State of the Park report by the end of June 2011 and shared with communities and partners.

- b) Supporting the roll-out of broadband to areas of the National Park.

Targets:

- Obtain further information on residents access to broadband via our resident survey by the end of July 2011;
 - Assist Northumberland County Council in developing a BDUK broadband bid by December 2011;
 - Assist Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group / County Partnership to submit an uplands broadband bid to Defra by December 2011;
 - Complete the first LEADER broadband project by March 2012;
 - Trial mobile broadband in two areas of the National Park to start by March 2012;
- c) Make a joint bid with Northumberland County Council to Tranche 2 of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund for an integrated sustainable travel scheme for the county.

Targets:

- Bid submitted by February 2012.
- d) Continue to financially support Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited in the operation and marketing of the Hadrian's Wall Country Bus Service AD122 for 2011 to ensure a fully accessible service for the less able and a low impact method of accessing the National Park.

Targets:

- Service to operate between April and October 2011;
- Service to carry a minimum of 42,000 passengers in 2011.

4.3 We will help to ensure people have opportunities to work in, live in and contribute to resilient communities in and around the National Park by:

- a) Continue to monitor housing needs within the National Park and use our local needs policy (Local Development Framework policy 10) to inform planning decisions.
- b) Provide advice and support to communities through 'Action Area' working.

Targets:

- Provide 60 community grants, and 10 other grants by March 2012;
 - Direct community groups to potential funding sources, sharing best practice and providing advice and guidance on writing funding applications throughout the year.
- c) Host the Northumberland Uplands LEADER to assist local communities access advice and funding for rural development.

Targets:

- Approve applications that fill the gaps identified in the Local Development Strategy by the Local Action Group by September 2011;
 - Ensure the full financial allocation to the Northumberland Uplands LEADER for the financial year is spent by March 2012;
 - Utilise participatory methods of appraisal to evaluate previously approved LEADER projects and identify lessons that can be shared with interested bodies;
 - Build a body of evidence from project evaluations that can demonstrate the success of LEADER projects in the Northumberland Uplands by March 2012.
- d) Work with the Northumberland Uplands LEADER Local Action Group (NULAG) to determine the feasibility of becoming a stand-alone body in its own right and to scope the future role of any new body.

Targets:

- Determine feasibility of creating a stand-alone NULAG by July 2011;
- If appropriate, new stand-alone body to be constituted by December 2011;
- Explore role in administering other funding programmes by January 2012.

Meeting Our Business Plan Targets - What success will look like

- **Level of influence of National Park residents on Northumberland National Park Authority services in the top 20% nationally by 2013**
- **95% of businesses and households within the National Park are able to access affordable broadband and speeds of at least 2MB by 2012**
- **The age profile of the National Park indicates a decrease in outward migration of young people and adults of working age**

Resources to deliver the priorities

<u>2010/11</u>	<u>2011/12</u>
Budget: £124,900	3 Year Plan: £116,600
Outturn: £163,609	Current Budget: £221,000

Aim 5. A Valued Asset

We will help ensure the National Park is valued as a local, regional and national asset, with influence beyond its boundaries that is worth looking after now and for generations to come

5.1 We will promote social and economic contribution of the National Park, particularly to North East England by:

- a) Ensuring by December 2011 that the Northumberland County Economic Strategy and its resulting action plan make maximum advantage of the economic benefits from the National Park's special qualities.

Targets:

- Use the Park's natural resources to combat the effects of climate change which would otherwise threaten the resilience of business and communities in the face events should as drier summers and more flash floods by supporting Cheviot Futures and actively promote the practical solutions in 2011/12 and effectively communicate actions and benefits;
 - Take advantage of the need and opportunity to test innovative solutions in the North East's deepest rural area to address issues of poor access to broadband and find more affordable and renewable energy sources in areas reliant on off-mains energy supply.
- b) Pilot innovative solutions to social and economic issues in the National Park to demonstrate that solutions to issues such as low carbon living / economy and fuel poverty can be just as effectively delivered in a deep rural area as a city centre / urban area.

Targets:

- Support an exemplar micro-hydro project in the Cheviot area of the National Park;
- Support a comprehensive building insulation programme addressing 50% of the homes in the National Park by December 2012.

- c) Working with the North East Historic Environment Forum to highlight the value of culture and heritage to the economy and quality of life of the North East.

Targets:

- Create awareness and support the network of Historic Environment Champions in the North East;
- Promote a positive role for heritage and tourism in the North East Local Enterprise Partnership.

- d) Supporting the work of Sustainable Development North East (SustainE) in its championing role for sustainable development.

Targets:

- Contribute to development of a new model for 'SustainE' by October 2011;
- Contribute best practice from Northumberland National Park to a minimum of 3 'championing' events by March 2011/12.

5.2 The National Park will make contribution to a broader network of protected areas by:

- a) Actively support the hosting of two exchange visits and joint work with other European protected areas and rural actors in 2011/12.

Targets:

- Host a delegation from Sweden by June 2011 so share knowledge and support the creation of a new Swedish National Park;
- Host one further visit by March 2012.

- b) Actively contribute to English National Park Authorities Association and the UK Association of National Park Authorities events and programmes of work.

Targets:

- Work through the English National Park Authorities Association to inform national policy decisions relating to National Parks;
- Ensure Northumberland is represented on all English National Park Authorities Association working groups with an attendance in excess of 90% in 2011/12;
- The Leadership Team will provide timely and effective support for the Chairman in his capacity as the Chair of the English National Park Authorities;
- Work through the Association of National Park Authorities to provide training for Members and to share best practice;
- Present the work / approach of Northumberland at the UK Association of National Park Authorities Valuing National Parks annual workshop in 2011.

5.3 We will help ensure the value of the National Park is clearly demonstrated in the policies and actions of those who have influence on the National Park by:

- a) Ensuring the outcomes and objectives of the National Park Management Plan and National Park purposes are fully embedded within policy impacting on the National Park such as the County Council's planning policies in their emerging Local Development Framework and the changing national policy.

Targets:

- Ensure our planning staff are on and attend relevant meetings of the Council's Local Development Working group in 2011/12;
- Put our case directly to government on potential changes to planning policy which effect it more than other English National Park Authorities;
- Work jointly with the English National Park Authorities Association on matters of joint concern ensuring that we input to all events and consultation activities in 2011/12;
- Contribute to relevant government policy reviews such as the 2011 Forestry Review.

Meeting Our Business Plan Targets - What success will look like

- **Enhanced awareness of the value of the National Park to the region.**
- **Northumberland National Park is recognised as a regional / national exemplar for low carbon living.**
- **The Integrated Regional Strategy, Northumberland Community Strategy and neighbouring Local Development Frameworks have policies which are demonstrating that they protect the heritage assets and support the delivery of the key elements of the National Park Management Plan.**

Resources to deliver the priorities

<u>2010/11</u>	<u>2011/12</u>
Budget: £176,000	3 Year Plan: £180,300
Outturn: £153,970	Current Budget: £144,700

Aim 6. An Excellent Organisation

We will be an efficient, effective and inclusive organisation, achieving though partnerships and will strive for excellence

6.1 We will continue to deliver value for money by:

- a) Ensuring the Authority is able to deliver on a programme of cuts in national park grant of 33% in real terms by 1st April 2014 by embedding staff cuts, service cuts and maximising income generation and efficiency.

Targets:

- Set a detailed cuts action plan by end of May 2011 to deliver £384,000 of net savings in staff and costs by April 2012, and additional income of £48,000;
- Complete a change management programme to implement the necessary staff cuts by July 2011 and review the process by March 2012.

- b) Targeting the use of ICT software, hardware and telecoms to the internal and external needs of the Authority.

Targets:

- Create a new 3 year Information Systems Strategy by March 2012;
- Ensure the new staff structure and new member governance arrangements are fully supported by ICT services by December 2011;
- Identify and implement areas of savings within ICT, including Wide Area Networks, home working, and web access software by March 2012;
- Deliver a new system for planning applications including investigating shared service options with the Northumberland County Council planning authority by December 2011;
- Change to a new website content management platform and ensure staff are trained to exploit the potential of the new system by August 2011;
- Rationalise provision of analogue telephone lines to the Authority's properties to realise savings of £5,000 p.a. by March 2012;
- Re-examine back-up procedures to ensure fit-for-purpose data security and retention by September 2011 and make savings in terms of costs and CO₂ by completing the computer server virtualisation programme by December 2012;
- Review the Authority's printing facilities to reduce costs by 20% over the next two years.

- c) Ensuring performance management is used to develop and manage service improvements and is effectively communicated internally and externally.

Targets:

- Make project performance management more effective and simplified by introducing a new project initiation and monitoring processes by December 2011;
- Overall programme of projects to outturn to within 5% of the budget for 2011/12;
- Achieve favourable audit reports in 2011/12 (external and internal) by maintaining and improving existing financial systems and controls;
- Quarterly updates of performance communicated on staff intranet and National Park website and via highly visible electron displays at our main centres;
- 20 executive summaries / position statements on key work areas produced and communicated internally and externally by January 2012;
- Ensure that priority 1 actions from 2010 National Park Authority Performance Assessment Improvement Plan are all underway in 2011/12 with the aim of final completion by the end of the following year.

- d) Ensuring a focus is maintained in providing a high quality and efficient Development Management Service

Targets:

- Ensure 80% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks and 80% of pre application enquiries are responded to within 28 working days in 2011/12;
- Make improvements to the system enabling customers to track the progress of their planning applications by December 2011;
- 75% of customers are satisfied with the development management service by March 2012;
- Consistently and clearly communicate Development Management Committee decisions and reasons for the decisions to the community within 48 hours;
- Ensure that fair and appropriate local fees are charged with a new scheme in place by March 2012.

- e) Implementing the Authority's agreed Estate Strategy.

Targets:

- Improvements to the Head Office, Eastburn, Hexham to enable office space to be rented / leased to paying partners or clients;
- Completion of improvements to Eastburn's car park and grounds by July 2011, internal works and staff moves completed by October 2011 and £10,000 of rental income received by the end of March 2012;
- Photovoltaic cells installed at the National Park Centre at Once Brewed by July 2011 and the Coquetdale Centre by March 2012;
- On-site communication of the benefits of renewable energy at Once Brewed and Coquetdale Centre by Easter 2012.
- Build 40 extra car parking spaces at the Housesteads car park to raise future income by £10,000 p.a. by March 2012.

6.2 We will continually develop our staff, volunteers and board members by:

- a) Delivering an effective change management programme as a result of having to reduce staffing resources by 30% over two years with most of the change being embedded in 2011/12. The changes will be effectively communicated inside and outside the organisation.

Targets:

- All new Heads of Department in post and operating new reporting lines by the end of May 2011;
 - All staff will be in post and internal and external communication will be launched by July 2011;
 - Support programme for staff having to leave the employment of the Authority in place by May 2011 and 80% of those leaving to have achieved their desired outcome within 6 months;
 - Externalise the statutory role of Monitoring Officer in May 2011 and internalise the statutory role of Chief Financial Officer by March 2012;
 - Personal development plans for all staff in place and being actively implemented by December 2011 with 20% of personal training and development top priority activities completed by end of March 2012;
 - Review current standing orders and financial procedures completed and new systems developed by April 2012;
 - A minimum of 4 training days by the end of March 2012 for Voluntary Rangers to increase skills and knowledge in designated areas of operation.
- b) Completing a review of the Authority's governance arrangements whilst taking into account the needs arising from Defra's national review of national park governance and the wider localism agenda from government.

Targets:

- Agree a set of new governance criteria for consultation by October 2011;
 - New governance arrangements to be formally agreed by end of December 2011;
 - Prioritise member training and familiarisation with the planning process and new building design guide ensuring all members of the Development Management Committee receive training in 2011.
- c) Ensuring the Authority Members and volunteers comply with Health and Safety legislation and all staff, Members and volunteers have effective training opportunities.

Targets:

- Initiate a full audit of the Authority's health and safety procedures during June 2011 to be completed by August 2011, ensuring arrangements match the new organisation structures and the enabling approach of the Authority;
- Number of relevant work related incidents to be less than 10 per year;
- Number of days lost due to work related incidents fewer than 50 days per year.

6.3 We will work with partners by:

- a) Completing a strategic partnership review by September 2011.
- b) Continuing to support and develop the National Park Management Plan Partnership.

Targets:

- Refresh and expand the membership of the Management Plan Partnership by end July 2012;
 - Prepare the Management Plan Annual Action Plan through the Management Plan Partnership by December 2011;
 - Monitor delivery of the Management Plan Action Plan in October 2011 and communicate key messages to partners and the public by November 2011.
- c) Ensure resilience in the face of major incidents (such as floods, severe winter weather and serious police / emergency service activity) to maintain the special qualities of the National Park, the public's ability to enjoy the area and the ability of businesses and communities to thrive:

Targets:

- Be an active member of the Local Resilience Forum and specifically within the Environment and Community thematic groups;
- Ensure Defra and local communities are well informed of action and the implications of actions;
- Ensure the Authority's own business continuity plan is updated and kept relevant throughout 2011/12.

6.4 We will ensure our services are available to all people in our diverse society by:

- a) Continuing to embed equality of opportunity in delivery of all our services, particularly in relation to the new Equality Act.

Targets:

- Review the role and membership of the Equality Forum and Equality Steering Group by end of December 2011;
- Deliver equality actions identified within the existing Equality Impact Assessments and develop a programme for review of Equality Impact Assessments including identifying any new Equality Analysis that need to be undertaken by end December 2011;
- Review our Equality Policy and identify equality objectives by the end of March 2012;
- Identify and publish equality information to demonstrate our compliance with equality legislation by end of March 2012.

6.5 We will 'Walk the Talk' on climate change by:

a) Reducing energy use and green house gas emissions from our operations.

Targets:

- Implement the green transport plan to reduce CO₂ emissions by 10% in the year, including trialling electric vehicles as part of the wider regional initiative;
- Improve co-ordination of Member activities from January 2012 to reduce travel miles by 5% p.a.;
- Introduce paper / print saving initiatives to reduce paper usage by the equivalent of 10% and print costs by 20% p.a. by March 2012;
- Develop more efficient systems for data collection on our own CO₂ footprint for the key work areas of fleet vehicles, staff car travel and building energy by December 2011;
- Explain and promote our activities as a model for low carbon working alongside the above initiatives.

Meeting Our Business Plan Targets - What success will look like:

- **Maintain leverage levels of 150% on our National Park Grant and the National Park Authority judged as a highly effective authority through the national performance assessment in November 2011**
- **Maintenance of our Investors in People award throughout 2010 to 2013**
- **Assessed as an 'Excellent Partner' through our Partner surveys in 2010 and 2011**
- **Migrate from Level 3 of the Equality Standard to the equivalent level, 'achieving authority', of the Equality Framework by October 2011 and greater representation from underrepresented groups in NPA workforce, governance and forums by 2013 from 2010 baseline**
- **10% reduction in the carbon footprint of the NNPA estate and activities by 2013 from the 2009 baseline**

Resources to deliver the priorities

<u>2010/11</u>	<u>2011/12</u>
Budget: £487,300	3 Year Plan: £505,900
Outturn: £394,932	Current Budget: £514,900
